

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 02746 220947Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 2746

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: OEXC, CZ

SUBJECT: PAVEL KOHOUT, ZDENEK MLYNAR, AND THE PLASTIC PEOPLE
OF THE UNIVERSE'S TRIAL

USIA FOR IEU-ARNOLD

1. PAVEL KOHOUT: WELL-KNOWN CZECH PSYCHIATRIST TOLD PAO SEPT. 20 THAT PLAYWRIGHT PAVEL KOHOUT STILL DOES NOT HAVE EXIT PERMIT TO ATTEND SCHEDULED BROADWAY OPENING OF HIS RECENT PLAY, "POOR MURDERER" IN MID-OCTOBER. SAID KOHOUT AND WIFE SAT FOR TWO HOURS AT MINISTRY OF INTERIOR THIS SUMMER BEFORE ANY CLERK WOULD ACCEPT EXIT VISA APPLICATION. CLERK REPORTEDLY TOLD AUTHOR, "YOU WON'T GET AN EXIT PERMIT. KOHOUT ASKED FOR A WRITTEN TURNDOWN "LIKE ANY OTHER CITIZEN." MINISTRY OF INTERIOR MAJOR THEN SAID KOHOUT HAD ABUSED THE TRAVEL PERMISSION GIVEN HIM LAST YEAR TO ATTEND PLAY OPENINGS IN AUSTRIA, GERMANY, AND SWITZERLAND TO CRITICIZE GOC. KOHOUT SAID HE MADE NO POLITICAL STATEMENTS WHILE ABROAD, BUT DID ANSWER POINTED SET OF QUESTIONS MAILED TO HIM BY "DIE WELT" ONCE HE HAD RETURNED TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA. DIFFERENCE WAS LOST ON MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OFFICIAL, WHO SAID THEY HAD TOLD HIM NOT TO DISCUSS POLITICS WHEN ABROAD.

2. FYI: KOHOUT HAS SPENT THIS SUMMER WORKING ON A 300-PAGE MANUSCRIPT ABOUT THE HISTORY OF EXECUTIONERS, THEIR TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT, AND TECHNIQUES. ALTHOUGH NOT OVERTLY ABOUT CZECHOSLOVAKIA, CZECH AND RUSSIAN PRACTICES ARE FULLY DISCUSSED.

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PAGE 02 PRAGUE 02746 220947Z

IT SHOULD BE FINISHED BY DECEMBER AND, LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE

KOHOUT DOES, WILL PROBABLY CREATE A STIR. END FYI.

3. ZDENEK MLYNAR: SAME SOURCE SAID THAT FORMER PARTY SECRETARY ZDENEK MLYNAR, DUBCEK ERA POLITICIAN, NOW WORKING AS A LABORER IN NATIONAL MUSEUM ENTOMOLOGY COLLECTION(IT USED TO BE HIS HOBBY) IS ONE OF THE SIGNATORIES OF PETITION TO GOC PROTESTING FORTHCOMING TRIAL OF THE ROCK GROUP PLASTIC PEOPLE OF THE UNIVERSE, SCHEDULED TO OPEN MONDAY IN PRAGUE. NON-PARTY ARTISTS AND INTELLECTUALS SEE THE TRIAL, AND ITS RECENT PREDECESSOR IN PILSEN, AS GOC EFFORT TO SET PRECEDENTS FOR RESTRICTING ARTISTS' ACTIVITIES AND PROVIDING PENAL CURBS ON ANY SORT OF LITERARY OR ARTISTIC EXPRESSION NOT AGREED TO BY GOVERNMENT.

4. SOURCE SAID KOHOUT HAD OBTAINED PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT OF PILSEN HEARING, A KEY PART OF WHICH WAS CHARGE AGAINST YOUNG MUSICIANS OF USING OBSCENE WORD "UNDERGROUND" IN ONE SONG PRESENTED IN PUBLIC. PROSECUTOR WANTED TO KNOW IF UNDERGROUND MUSIC HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH WORLD WAR II CLANDESTINE ACTIVITIES. YOUTH SAIS NO, IT WAS SOMETHING ELSE. PROSECUTOR SAID NO IT WASN'T AND ARTISTS WERE MAKING SONGS AGAINST THE STATE.

5. COMMENT: NOT A GOOD WEEK FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES, FREE ARTISTIC EXPRESSION, AND DUE PROCESS.
BYRNE

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